CHARLENE PRUITT, Individually and On behalf of the wrongful death heirs of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased

PLAINTIFF

VS.

NO.2012-304

INVACARE CORPORATION, ABC, AND DEF

DEFENDANT

CERTIFICATE OF CLERK

THE ATTACHED PLEADINGS ARE CERTIFIED TRUE AND CORRECT COPIES OF THE COMPLETE FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE OF THE SMITH COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT IN THE ABOVE CAPTIONED MATTER.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL, this the 15 $^{\mathrm{TH}}$ DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2013

ANTHONY GRAYSON, CIRCUIT CLERK

DEPUTY CLERK

EXHIBIT

Case 2:13-c	cv-00293-TSL-JMR Doc	cument 1-1 Filed 03/01/13	Page 2 of 15
. COVER SHEET	Court Identification	n Docket # Case Yea.	Docket Number
Civil Case Filing Fo	orm [/a 5]	711 2012	304
(To be completed by Attorn		Court ID	
Prior to Filing of Plead		(сн, сі, со)	
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Mississippi Supreme Court Administrative Office of Courts	Form AOC/01 Month Date ((Rev 2009) This area to be con	Year	Case Number if filed prior to 1/1/94
			Judicial District
In the CIRCUIT	Court of SMITH	County —	Judiciai District
Origin of Suit (Place an "X" in one b		at Enrolled Tansfer from Othe	r court Other
ايسا ج باننا	Reinstated Foreign Judgmen Reopened Joining Suit/Action	· -··· -·· .	_ other
		r Additional Plaintiffs on Separate Form	
Individual PRUITT	CHARLENE	Additional Flamtins on Separate Form	
Last Name		ame Maiden Name, if appli	icable M.I. Jr/Sr/III/IV
		or Administrator(trix) of an Estate, and enter sty	
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	g Initial Pleading is NOT an attorney		
Signature of Individual Filing:	Clay-Ma, Para		
Defendant - Name of Defendant - E	Enter Additional Defendants on Sepa	rate Form	
Individual	·		
Last Name			
Check (x) if Individual Defe Estate of	ndant is acting in capacity as Executor(trix	c) or Administrator(trix) of an Estate, and enter s	style:
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Business INVACARE CORPORA	TION		
Enter leg	gal name of business, corporation, partner	rship, agency - If Corporation, indicate the state	where incorporated
	ndant is acting in the name of an entity oth	ner than the above, and enter below:	
D/B/A			
Attorney (Name & Address) - If Known			MS Bar No.
Damages Sought: Compensator	y \$ Punitive \$	Check (x) if child suppor	t is contemplated as an issue in this suit.*
		ked, please submit completed Child Support Info	
Nature of Suit (Place an "X" in one		Children/Minors - Non-Domestic Adoption - Contested	Real Property Adverse Possession
Domestic Relations Child Custody/Visitation	Business/Commercial Accounting (Business)	Adoption - Contested Adoption - Uncontested	Ejectment
Child Support	Business Dissolution	Consent to Abortion Minor	Eminent Domain
Contempt	Debt Collection	Removal of Minority	Eviction
Divorce:Fault	Employment	Other	Judicial Foreclosure
Divorce: Irreconcilable Diff.	Foreign Judgment	Civil Rights Elections	Lien Assertion Partition
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Modification	Other	Habeas Corpus	Title Boundary or Easement
Paternity	Probate	Post Conviction Relief/Prisoner	Other
Property Division	Accounting (Probate)	Other	Torts
Separate Maintenance	Birth Certificate Correction	Contract	Bad Faith Fraud
Termination of Parental Rights UIFSA (eff 7/1/97; formerly URES	Commitment	Breach of Contract Installment Contract	Loss of Consortium
	(A) Concentatorchia		Malpractice - Legal
Other	SA) Conservatorship Guardianship	Insurance	Midipidetice degain
Appeals	· —	Insurance Specific Performance	Malpractice - Medical
	Guardianship Heirship Intestate Estate	Specific Performance Other	Malpractice - Medical Mass Tort
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Appeals Administrative Agency County Court Hardship Petition (Driver License	Guardianship Heirship Intestate Estate Minor's Settlement Muniment of Title	Specific Performance Other Statutes/Rules Bond Validation	Malpractice - Medical Mass Tort Negligence - General Negligence - Motor Vehicle
Appeals Administrative Agency County Court Hardship Petition (Driver License	Guardianship Heirship Intestate Estate Minor's Settlement Muniment of Title Name Change	Specific Performance Other Statutes/Rules Bond Validation Civil Forfeiture	Malpractice - Medical Mass Tort Negligence - General
Appeals Administrative Agency County Court Hardship Petition (Driver License	Guardianship Heirship Intestate Estate Minor's Settlement Muniment of Title Name Change	Specific Performance Other Statutes/Rules Bond Validation Civil Forfeiture	Maipractice - Medical Mass Tort Negligence - General Negligence - Motor Vehicle Product Liability
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SMITH CO. CIRCUIT CLERK

Case 2:13-cv-00293-TSL-JMR Document 1-1 Filed 03/01/13 Page 3 of 15

IN THE	CIRCUIT C	OURT OF <u>SMITH</u>	COUNTY, MISSIS	SSIPPI
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Docket No	Chronological No.	Clerk's Local ID	Docket No. If Filed Prior to 1/1/94	
			Page 1 of Defendants Page . CASE FILING FORM COVER S	
Defendant #2:				
Individual:	net Name	First Name	Maiden Name, if Applicable)	Middle Init Jr/Sr/III/IV
			r) or Administrator(trix) of an Estate, a	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			er/Operator (D/B/A) or State Agency, a	and enter that name below
Business ABC			orporation, indicate state where incorporated	
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Defendant #3:				,
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ATTORNEY FOR THIS DEFEN	IDANT:Bar#orN	Name:	Pro Hac Vice (✔)	Not an Attorney(✓)
Defendant #4:		<u>, </u>		
Individual:	ast Name	First Name	Maiden Name, if Applicable	Middle Init. Jr/Sr/III/IV
			c) or Administrator(trix) of an Estate,	
Check (✓) if Individual	Defendant is acting in ca	pacity as Business Own	er/Operator (D/B/A) or State Agency, a	and enter that name below
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CHARLENE PRUITT, Individually and on behalf of the wrongful death heirs of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased **PLAINTIFF**

VS.

CIVIL ACTION NO. <u>2012-304</u>

INVACARE CORPORATION, ABC, and DEF

DEFENDANTS

COMPLAINT

COMES NOW Charlene Pruitt individually and on behalf of the wrongful death beneficiaries of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased, files this her Complaint against Defendants Invacare Corporation, ABC, and DEF, as follows:

I.

Plaintiff Charlene Pruitt is an adult resident citizen of Jasper County, Mississippi, and she brings this civil action on behalf of the wrongful death statutory beneficiaries of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased ("Nixon").

II.

Defendant Invacare Corporation, is a non-resident corporation with its principal place of business located in Elyria, Ohio, which has appointed CT Corporation System, 1300 East Ninth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44114 as its agent for service of process.

Defendants ABC and DEF are entities/individuals responsible for the design, manufacture, distribution, and sale of the bed described herein. The true identities of ABC and DEF are unknown at this time. Once the identities of ABC and DEF are discovered, their names will be substituted herein in accordance with the Mississippi Rules of Civil Procedure.

FILED

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SMITH CO. CIRCUIT CLERK

III.

On or about October 30, 2009, Ms. Nixon was utilizing an Invacare homecare bed ("bed") when her head became lodged between the guardrail and bed thereby asphyxiating Ms. Nixon and causing her untimely death. The bed was designed, manufactured, distributed, and sold by Defendants Invacare, ABC, and DEF.

IV.

The bed was, at the time it left the control of the Defendants and at the time it was utilized by Ms. Nixon, a defective product, unreasonably dangerous for the use for which it was intended; and therefore, the Defendants are strictly liable for the injuries and damages to the Plaintiff as set forth below under the doctrine of strict liability in tort and pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated §11-1-63, to the extent that provision applies to this action. Further, the Defendants were negligent in the design, manufacture, distribution, and sale of the bed in question. Additionally, the Defendants breached warranties, both expressed and implied. Finally, the Defendants are also liable to the Plaintiff pursuant to the doctrine of *res ipsa loquitur*.

V.

In the addition to the foregoing, the bed failed to contain adequate warnings or instructions. At the time the bed left the control of the Defendants, the Defendants knew or should have known about the defects and dangerous condition of the bed and that the ordinary user would not realize the defect or dangerous condition. Finally, the warnings or instructions were inadequate in that the Defendants failed to communicate or otherwise provide sufficient information regarding the dangers and safe uses of the bed taking into account the characteristics of and ordinary knowledge common to an individual utilizing such a bed.

VI.

As a direct and proximate result of the negligence, strict liability, breach of warranties, failure to adequately warn or instruct, and other errors and omissions of the Defendants, Ms. Nixon was killed on October 30, 2009. The Plaintiff is entitled to recover, on behalf of the wrongful death beneficiaries, all damages provided for by Mississippi Code Annotated §11-7-13, including damages for loss of enjoyment for life.

VII.

The conduct of the Defendants with regard to the design, manufacture, distribution, and sale of the bed constitutes gross negligence which evidences a willful, wanton, or reckless disregard for the safety of others, such that the Plaintiff is entitled to punitive damages of and from the Defendants pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §11-1-65.

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Plaintiff, Charlene Pruitt, individually and on behalf of the wrongful death beneficiaries of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased, files this her Complaint against Defendants Invacare Corporation, ABC, and DEF, and demands judgment in the sum that will reasonably compensate the wrongful death statutory beneficiaries of Martha Ruth Nixon for all of the actual damages. Plaintiff further demands punitive damages of and from the Defendants in an amount sufficient to deter similar conduct in the future. Plaintiff demands pre-judgment and post-judgment interest, attorney's fee, and all costs of this Court.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLENE PRUITT, INDIVIDUALLY AND ON BEHALF OF THE WRONGFUL DEATH BENEFICIARIES OF MARTHA

RUTHAVIXON, DECEASED

BY:

CRYME\$ M. PITTMAN

OF COUNSEL:

CRYMES M. PITTMAN, MSB# 99225 PITTMAN, GERMANY, ROBERTS & WELSH, LLP 410 South President Street (39201) Post Office Box 22985 Jackson, Mississippi 39225-2985 Telephone: (601) 948-6200 Facsimile: (601) 948-6187

EUGENE C. TULLOS, MSB# 8302 TULLOS AND TULLOS Post Office Box 74 Raleigh, Mississippi 39153 Telephone: (601) 782-4242 Facsimile: (601) 782-4212

Case 2:13-cv-00293-TSL-JMR Document 1-1 Filed 03/01/13 Page 8 of 15

PITTMAN, GERMANY, ROBERTS & WELSH, L.L.P.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW 410 SOUTH PRESIDENT STREET JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39201

TELEPHONE: (601) 948-6200 FACSIMILE: (601) 948-6187

CRYMES G. PITTMAN ROBERT G. GERMANY JOSEPH E. ROBERTS, JR. C. VICTOR WELSH, III CRYMES M. PITTMAN P. O. BOX 22985 JACKSON, MS 39225-2985

Writer's email: cmp@pgrwlaw.com

October 26, 2012

Via Hand Delivery

Anthony Grayson, Clerk Smith County Circuit Court Raleigh, Mississippi

RE: Charlene Pruitt, Individually and on behalf of the Wrongful Death Beneficiaries of Martha Ruth Nixon, Deceased vs. Invacare Corporation, ABC and DEF; In the Circuit Court of Smith County, Mississippi

Dear Mr. Grayson:

Enclosed please find the originals and one copy each of the Complaint, civil cover sheet, and this firm's check in the amount of \$160.00 representing the filing fee in this matter. Also enclosed are the original and one copy of the Summons which I asked be issued and returned to me.

I appreciate your assistance and ask that you let me know if you have any questions or need anything further.

Yours very truly,

PITTMAN, GERMANY, ROBERTS

CRYMES M. PITTMAN

CMP:jlm Enclosures

cc: Eugene C. Tullos, Esquire, w/enclosures

CHARLEEN PRUITT, Individually and on behalf of the wrongful death heirs of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased **PLAINTIFF**

vs.

CIVIL ACTION NO.2012-304

INVACARE CORPORATION, ABC, and DEF

DEFENDANTS

FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT

COMES NOW Charleen Pruitt individually and on behalf of the wrongful death beneficiaries of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased, files this her First Amended Complaint against Defendants Invacare Corporation, ABC, and DEF, as follows:

I.

Plaintiff Charleen Pruitt is an adult resident citizen of Jasper County, Mississippi, and she brings this civil action on behalf of the wrongful death statutory beneficiaries of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased ("Nixon").

II.

Defendant Invacare Corporation, is a non-resident corporation with its principal place of business located in Elyria, Ohio, which has appointed CT Corporation System, 1300 East Ninth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44114 as its agent for service of process.

Defendants ABC and DEF are entities/individuals responsible for the design, manufacture, distribution, and sale of the bed described herein. The true identities of ABC and DEF are unknown at this time. Once the identities of ABC and DEF are discovered, their names will be substituted herein in accordance with the Mississippi Rules of Civil Procedure.

JAN 22 2013

SMITH COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

III.

On or about October 30, 2009, Ms. Nixon was utilizing an Invacare homecare bed ("bed") when her head became lodged between the bedrail and bed thereby asphyxiating Ms. Nixon and causing her untimely death. The bed utilized component parts including the bedrails and an air mattress which were designed and manufactured by Defendants, Invacare, ABC and DEF. The bed is model number 5490IVC and its component parts are 5000IVC, 5301IVC, and 5410IVC/MO14773. The bed bears serial number IVC05H217580. The bed was designed, manufactured, distributed, and sold by Defendants Invacare, ABC, and DEF.

IV.

The bed, including the bedrails, air mattress, and component parts referenced above were defective rendering the bed unreasonably dangerous. The defects include, but are not limited to the following:

- The size and location of the openings within the bedrail itself, the shape of the bedrail at the ends, the closest of the fit between the bedrail and the frame; and the area between the bedrail and mattress on the bed created the risk of lethal entrapment.
- The use of the air mattress in conjunction with a bed or bedrail that already allows for entrapment risks, the risk is in enhanced in so far as the air mattress alters the geometry of the bed and because air mattresses and because of the soft edges within the air mattresses.

V.

The bed was, at the time it left the control of the Defendants and at the time it was utilized by Ms. Nixon, a defective product, unreasonably dangerous for the use for which it was intended;

and therefore, the Defendants are strictly liable for the injuries and damages to the Plaintiff as set forth below under the doctrine of strict liability in tort and pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated §11-1-63, to the extent that provision applies to this action. More specifically, the bed and its component parts were designed and manufactured in such a manner that an individual like Ms. Nixon could become trapped in the bedrail or between the rail and the bed causing injuries and/or asphyxiation and death rendering the bed defective and unreasonably dangerous for the use in which it was intended. Further, the Defendants were negligent in the design, manufacture, distribution, and sale of the bed in question in that the bed and its component parts could cause injuries or death when an individual, such as Ms. Nixon, became trapped in the rail and/or between the bed and rail. Additionally, the Defendants breached warranties, both expressed and implied. Finally, the Defendants are also liable to the Plaintiff pursuant to the doctrine of *res ipsa loquitur*.

VI.

In the addition to the foregoing, the bed failed to contain adequate warnings or instructions. Specifically, the Defendant's bed failed to warn an end user, such as Ms. Nixon, of the dangers of entrapment which could result in injury or death from asphyxiation. At the time the bed left the control of the Defendants, the Defendants knew or should have known about the defects and dangerous condition of the bed and that the ordinary user would not realize the defect or dangerous condition. Finally, the warnings or instructions were inadequate in that the Defendants failed to communicate or otherwise provide sufficient information regarding the dangers and safe uses of the bed taking into account the characteristics of and ordinary knowledge common to an individual utilizing such a bed.

VII.

As a direct and proximate result of the negligence, strict liability, breach of warranties, failure to adequately warn or instruct, and other errors and omissions of the Defendants, Ms. Nixon suffered an untimely death on October 30, 2009. The Plaintiff is entitled to recover, on behalf of the wrongful death beneficiaries, all damages provided for by Mississippi Code Annotated §11-7-13, including damages for loss of enjoyment for life.

VIII.

The conduct of the Defendants with regard to the design, manufacture, distribution, and sale of the bed constitutes gross negligence which evidences a willful, wanton, or reckless disregard for the safety of others, such that the Plaintiff is entitled to punitive damages of and from the Defendants pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §11-1-65.

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Plaintiff, Charleen Pruitt, individually and on behalf of the wrongful death beneficiaries of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased, files this her First Amended Complaint against Defendants Invacare Corporation, ABC, and DEF, and demands judgment in the sum that will reasonably compensate the wrongful death statutory beneficiaries of Martha Ruth Nixon for all of the actual damages. Plaintiff further demands punitive damages of and from the Defendants in an amount sufficient to deter similar conduct in the future. Plaintiff demands pre-judgment and post-judgment interest, attorney's fee, and all costs of this Court.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLEEN PRUITT, INDIVIDUALLY AND ON BEHALF OF THE WRONGFUL DEATH BENEFICIARIES OF MARTHA RUTH NIXON, DECEASED

BY:

CRYMES M. PITTM

OF COUNSEL:

CRYMES M. PITTMAN, MSB# 99225 PITTMAN, GERMANY, ROBERTS & WELSH, LLP 410 South President Street (39201) Post Office Box 22985 Jackson, Mississippi 39225-2985 Telephone: (601) 948-6200

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Facsimile: (601) 782-4212

Email: genetullos@tullosandtullosc.om

CHARLEEN PRUITT, Individually and on behalf of the wrongful death heirs of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased **PLAINTIFF**

vs.

CIVIL ACTION NO. <u>2012-304</u>

INVACARE CORPORATION, and ABC, and DEF

DEFENDANTS

SUMMONS

You are Hereby Commanded to Summons:

INVACARE CORPORATION c/o CT Corporation System, as registered agent 1300 East Ninth Street Cleveland, Ohio 44114

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT

The First Amended Complaint which is attached to this Summons is important and you must take immediate action to protect your rights by filing your Answer as provided by law and/or the Mississippi Rules of Civil Procedure.

This Answer must be filed as provided by law and/or the Mississippi Rules of Civil Procedure within 30 days of the date you are served or a Judgment by Default may be entered against you for the money or other things demanded in the Complaint.

DATED this the 22 day of January, 2013.

ANTHONY GRAYSON, CIRCUIT CLERK

BY: Clara Bearn D.C.

CRYMES M. PITTMAN, MSB # 99225 PITTMAN, GERMANY, ROBERTS & WELSH, L.L.P. Post Office Box 22985

Jackson, Mississippi 39225-2985 Telephone: 601-948-6200

Email: cmp@pgrwlaw.com

FILED

FEB 0 7 2013

SMITH COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

CHARLEEN PRUITT, Individually and on behalf of the wrongful death heirs of Martha Ruth Nixon, deceased **PLAINTIFF**

vs.

CIVIL ACTION NO.2012-304

INVACARE CORPORATION, ABC, and DEF

DEFENDANTS

SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION	COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY	
 Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired. Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you. Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits. 	A. Signature James Wright X CT Corporation System Addressee B. Received by Printed Nameth Street of Delivery D. Is delivery address different from Item 1?	
1. Article Addressed to:	if YES, enter delivery address below:	
CT Corporation System, as registered agent for Invacare Corporation	FEB 1 2013	
1300 East Ninth Street Cleveland, OH 44114	3. Service Type Certified Mail Registered Insured Mail C.O.D.	
	4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee)	
2. Article Number 7012 10	2557 9248 5000 01	
PS Form 3811, February 2004 Domestic	Domestic Return Receipt 102595-02-M-1540	